

## American Indians and Alaska Natives

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed a joint congressional resolution declaring November as "National American Indian Heritage Month." This month celebrates the commitment of the nation to respect and preserve the rich Native American traditions and cultures.

American Indians and Alaska Natives make up less than one percent of the total U.S. population but represent half the languages and cultures in the nation, as historic records show. These two racial groups include over 500 different tribal groupings and reflect great diversity of geographic location, language, socioeconomic conditions, and retention of traditional spiritual and cultural practices. The term "American Indian or Alaska Native" according to the U.S. Census Bureau, refers to people having origins in any of the original people of North, Central and South America who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment.

The main **American Indian tribal groupings** consist of:

Apache  
Cherokee  
Chippewa  
Choctaw  
Creek  
Iroquois or Mohawk  
Lumbee  
Navaho  
Pueblo  
Sioux

The main **Alaska Native tribal groupings** consist of:

Alaskan Athabascan  
Aleut  
Eskimo  
Tlingit-Haida

This report focuses on demographic, social and economic characteristics of the American Indians and Alaska Natives population in the United States and the District of Columbia.

### National Highlights

- There were 2.6 million people that listed American Indian and Alaska Native alone as their race in Census 2000. In 2005, this number has been estimated at 2.8 million people, a growth of 7 percent over 5 years. About 33 percent of this population is under the age of 18, compared with 26 percent of the total population. For the elderly population, 5.6 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives are 65 years and over, compared to 12.4 percent of the total population.
- In 2000, there was a higher percentage of family households among American Indians and Alaska Natives (73 percent) than in the total population (68 percent).
- Forty-five percent of American Indian and Alaska Native households were family households maintained by married couples. Among American Indian tribal groupings, the Creeks had the

**AMERICAN INDIANS** cont. on page 2

by  
Joy Phillips  
Robert Beasley



highest percent of married couple families (53.7 percent) while the Sioux had the lowest percent (35.7 percent). For the Alaska Native tribes, Eskimos had the highest married couple households (42.4 percent) and Alaskan Athabascan the lowest (30.9 percent).

- Homeownership rates for American Indians and Alaska Natives was 10 percent less than the total population; 56 percent and 66 percent, respectively for 2000. The Lumbee tribal group had the highest homeownership rate at 74.3 percent while the Sioux had the lowest rate at 41.7 percent.
- Sixty-four percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives live outside tribal areas.
- The educational attainment levels of American Indians and Alaska Natives were below those of the total population in 2000. Seventy-one percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives 25 years and over had at least a high school diploma, compared to 80 percent of the total population. While 24 percent of the total population had a bachelor's degree, only 11 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives had one.
- Labor force participation rate for American Indians and Alaska Natives in 2000 was 66 percent for men and 57 percent for women, compared to 71 percent for men and 58 percent for women in the total population.

For additional information contact:  
D.C. Office of Planning  
State Data Center  
801 North Capitol Street, NE  
Suite 4000  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 442 7600  
(202) 442-7638 FAX  
[www.planning.dc.gov](http://www.planning.dc.gov)



Government of the District of Columbia

- The top four job categories of employment for American Indians and Alaska Natives were in services; construction, extraction, and maintenance; production, transportation, and material moving; and farming, fishing, and forestry in 2000.
- In 2000, the median earnings of American Indian and Alaska Native were \$28,900 for men and \$22,800 for women, for full-time employment. This was substantially below the earnings for the total population with \$37,100 for men and \$27,200 for women.
- The poverty rate for American Indians and Alaska Natives (25.7 percent) was more than twice the poverty rate of the total population (12.4 percent).
- There were over 200,000 American Indian and Alaska Native business establishments in 2000, with revenues over 25 billion dollars.
- California ranked first in the number of American Indians and Alaska Natives living in the state in 2005 (696,600), followed by Oklahoma (401,100) and Arizona (334,700).

### District of Columbia Highlights

September 2004 witnessed the opening of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. This new facility stands as a symbol of the pride and vitality of the Native Peoples. The museum showcases masterworks of great cultural, historical, and spiritual significance. Through exhibits documenting past and present achievements of Native Americans, the hope is to introduce generations of visitors to the strong and living traditions of Native Americans. Also, as a center for scholarship and learning, the National Museum of the American Indian will also advance understanding of the diversity of our people.

- The number of American Indian and Alaska Native population living in the District of Columbia increased from 1,551 persons in 1990 to 1,961

persons in 2000 (0.3 percent of total District population). About 23 percent of this population was less than 18 years old, and 9 percent was over 65 years old in 2000. The estimate for 2005 shows 1,856 persons, a decrease of 115 persons over five years. They reside mainly in the Northwest areas of the city.

- The median age of American Indians and Alaska Natives in the District was 34 years. The median age of males was 31.6 years and females 36 years.
- While the average household size for the District was 2.16 in 2002, the household size for American Indians and Alaska Natives was higher at 2.31.
- The median household income of American Indians and Alaska Natives in the District was \$36,359, compared to \$40,127 for the total District.
- The poverty rates for American Indians and Alaska Natives mirrors the District wide poverty rate at 20 percent.
- In 2000, 47 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives were high school graduates or higher, compared to 77.8 percent District wide.
- Of the 47,184 business establishments in the District in 2002, 217 firms (0.5 percent) were owned by American Indians and Alaska natives. Their business ownership has grown from 66 firms in 1997 to 217 firms in 2002, with revenues of 42 million dollars.